

CLOSING STATEMENT

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(Check against delivery)

DR ALA ALWAN
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL
NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND MENTAL HEALTH
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

We have come to the end of two long, but stimulating days, during which we have discussed, for the first time within the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) scheme, the multidimensional aspects of noncommunicable diseases, injuries and development.

We have heard from delegates and experts about the opportunities and challenges that the emerging epidemics of noncommunicable diseases and injuries pose for development in each of their countries. And we have had six panels that have focused on the impact of noncommunicable diseases and injuries on economic and social development in low- and middle-income countries, what works to prevent these diseases and injuries, what works to treat people with these diseases and injuries, and the crucial role of international cooperation and partnership to address the challenges posed by noncommunicable diseases and injuries in low- and middle-income countries.

Above all, these two days have proven that noncommunicable diseases and development can be debated constructively in the United Nations.

This Meeting has been the culmination of months of preparation. I want, first and foremost, to express my gratitude to the President of ECOSOC, Ambassador Sylvie Lucas, for her support in preparing and organizing this Meeting.

I also want to thank the Ministers and representatives from the Member States, the Executive Secretary and Under-Secretary-General from the United Nations Economic Commission for Western Asia, the Assistant Secretary-General for the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs, the World Bank, the various United Nations agencies, other international organizations, NGOs, civil society and the private sector for their contributions in making this dialogue a success.

On this occasion, I would also like to extend my sincerest appreciation to Prime Minister of Qatar and Minister of Foreign Affairs, High Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al Thani for his tireless efforts in promoting and hosting this Meeting. We look forward to a continued collaboration as our efforts evolve.

I also extend my sincere appreciation to the Minister of Health, His Excellency Dr Abdullah bin Khalid Al Qahtani, for his outstanding contributions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Meeting has affirmed a number of key messages which are included in Action Plan of the Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases, endorsed by the World Health Organization's World Health Assembly in May 2008, as well as United Nations and World Health Assembly resolutions on traffic injuries, violence, and trauma care.

First, that noncommunicable diseases and injuries in low- and middle-income countries are a growing phenomenon and is a key component of development in both developing and developed countries. Second, noncommunicable diseases and injuries affect the poorest people in low- and middle-income countries most. Third, that national

policies in sectors other than health have a major bearing on risk factors for noncommunicable diseases and injuries. Fourth, that noncommunicable diseases and injuries place an enormous burden on the health system and the health work force. Fifth, that it is important for international cooperation to respond to low- and middle-income countries requests for technical assistance to build national capacities to address NCDs and injuries.

This dialogue over the past two days has emphasized that respect for the health-care needs of people with NCDs and injuries is the necessary foundation for strengthening primary care. Many of you have noted that the poorest need special protection in terms of reducing common modifiable risk factors that lead to NCDs and injuries.

You also highlighted that continued inaction is no substitute for development. Too often, poor people are forced to defer treatment for noncommunicable diseases and injuries. There has been widespread support for incorporating noncommunicable diseases and injuries into the development agenda and for integrating NCD issues and injuries into national development strategies, including into poverty reduction strategies.

You have repeatedly underscored the need to take action. Indeed, this would alleviate the negative aspects of noncommunicable diseases and injuries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We now have completed this Ministerial Meeting, where do we go from here? During these two days, in your plenary statements and in your remarks in the panels, nearly all of you have expressed the wish to continue an international and regional dialogue in some form. Many of you have embraced the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General's proposal of establishing a Regional Ministerial Multisectoral Task Force to take this work further. I commend your commitment to advancing this constructive dialogue on this important issue.

In closing, let me once more thank all of you for your active participation in this Ministerial Meeting and wish you all the best in your future deliberations on noncommunicable diseases and injuries. In the coming days, a draft summary will be made available to the Government of Qatar for distribution to all UNESCWA Member States, experts, United Nations agencies and other appropriate organizations who participated in this meeting.

Thank you.